



Ohio High School Athletic Association

Doug Ute, Executive Director

August 13, 2021

TO: Volleyball Head Coaches & Member School Athletic Directors

FR: Emily Mason, Senior Sport Administrator – Volleyball

RE: Volleyball Pre-Season Guidance – NFHS Rule Memo, Modifications and Options

TEAM BENCHES

For the 2020 season, the NFHS provided a rule modification that suspended the protocol of teams switching benches, due to the pandemic. After receiving a large amount of positive feedback across the nation, the NFHS Volleyball Rules Committee provides the state association with the authorization for teams to remain on the same benches throughout the match (NFHS Rule 9-1-2).

NFHS Rule 9-1-2: Teams shall occupy the bench located on the side of the net adjacent to their playing area throughout the match.

NOTE: By state association adoption, teams may remain on the same benches throughout the match.

A survey was sent to all head volleyball coaches to collect information and preference amongst our coaches in Ohio—thank you to those who participated! Based off 512 responses, 394 head volleyball coaches are in favor of suspending the protocol of switching benches between sets and staying on the same team bench for the entire match. Please see the survey results below.

OHSAA STATE ADOPTION (NFHS RULE 9-1-2)

OHSAA member schools shall remain on the same team benches throughout the match, unless there is a clear disadvantage present, as determined by the match official(s). Shall a present disadvantage be determined, this will be communicated prior to the start of the match and no later than the pre-match conference, and teams will switch benches in between sets.

1. Did you coach the sport of volleyball during the 2020 OHSAA school season?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	484
● No	28



2. If you coached in the 2020 OHSAA school season, did you prefer staying on the same bench the entire match?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	353
● No	52
● No preference	81
● Did not coach in 2020 school ...	26



3. Would you be in favor of suspending the protocol of switching team benches, and remaining on the same bench for the entire match (unless a clear disadvantage is determined) for the 2021 school season?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	394
● No	68
● No preference	50



NFHS MEMO – SUPPLY CHAIN SHORTAGE

On August 11, the NFHS released a memo ([HERE](#)) regarding a supply chain shortage of spandex in some areas of the country. The NFHS provided state associations with the authority to temporarily issue a case-by-case modification of NFHS Rule 4-2 (Legal Uniform), limiting the size and number of manufacturer’s logos for the 2021 fall season. The modification will allow for multiple logos **along the waistband only**, while maintaining the requirement that all uniform bottoms must be like-colored.

The modification does not permit more than one manufacturer's logo greater than 2 ¼ square inches on any other part of the uniform bottom or the uniform top. Please remember this modification is only for athletes being directly affected by the spandex supply chain shortage.

NFHS Rule 4-2-1f: ART 1 ... All uniforms shall adhere to the following:

f. A single partial/whole manufacturer's logo/trademark/reference, no more than 2 ¼ square inches with no dimension more than 2 ¼ inches, is permitted on each piece of the uniform provided placement does not interfere with the visibility of the player's number. Schools must request permission to modify rule 4-2-1f and provide proof of intent to purchase legal uniform bottoms from a uniform supplier.

While the OHSAA has not received direct inquiries regarding this challenge in Ohio, we have communicated with a few suppliers who did confirm this shortage. Should your student-athletes have a difficult time obtaining spandex uniform bottoms that meet NFHS Rule 4-2-1 along the waistband, please email Emily Mason (emason@ohsaa.org) with the student's name and grade, to obtain a waiver. OHSAA officials will request to see the approved waiver during pre-match, [as they are verifying uniform requirements] and there are uniform bottoms that do not meet the logo requirements (along the waistband) outlined.

As previously stated, this supply chain shortage is for spandex and the waistband only. Other uniform bottoms may be worn, as long as they are like-colored with the remainder of the team. We anticipate we will receive further direction from the NFHS on when the rule modification/waiver is no longer necessary.

SHAKING HANDS PRE/POST-MATCH

While the suspension of shaking hands (2020 season) has been lifted for the 2021 season, we have received questions about shaking hands between opposing teams throughout the season. The OHSAA would like to provide some options that member schools may utilize this season (for both pre/post-match) to teams that are not comfortable shaking hands with the opposing athletes.

At the completion of player introductions (pre-match), the NFHS Volleyball Case Book instructs the first referee to whistle and beckon both teams to shake hands on the court—please note the NFHS Volleyball Case Book does not address a protocol for shaking hands at the *conclusion* of the match. We recommend determining an agreed upon option at the pre-match conference, as displaying proper sportsmanship and support of the other team is an essential part of interscholastic athletics. Options are presented below for teams to utilize throughout the season, should they choose to do so.

POSSIBLE PRE-MATCH OPTIONS

1. Teams approach the net to shake hands or fist/elbow bump;
2. Teams approach the attack line to wish each other luck.

If coaches cannot agree on protocol, strongly recommend defaulting to option 2.

POSSIBLE POST-MATCH OPTIONS

1. Teams approach the net to shake hands or fist/elbow bump;
2. Teams approach the attack line and acknowledge each other (i.e., applause or a wave) before leaving the court;
3. Per the NFHS Rules Book & Case Manual, the first referee whistles and releases the players.

Note: There is no formal process established by the OHSAA or NFHS, but option 1 has typically been the norm in high school volleyball.

If coaches cannot agree on protocol, strongly recommend defaulting to option 3.

Q & A's

Q: Are we switching benches for the 2021 season?

A: No, unless a clear disadvantage is determined by the official(s) prior to the start of the match. The OHSAA has implemented a state adoption to stay on the same team bench throughout the entire match. Teams shall not switch benches unless a disadvantage is determined.

Q: What if our team is not comfortable shaking hands with our opponent?

A: Please communicate this with the opposing school and official(s) at the pre-match conference. The OHSAA has provided additional options to shaking hands, as mere recommendations.

Q: I have an athlete who is unable to order a pair of spandex that meets the NFHS logo specifications on the waistband, but found a uniform bottom (non-spandex) that meets the NFHS logo specifications. What should be done?

A: The athlete may wear a uniform bottom that is not spandex, that is a like-colored uniform bottom of the rest of the team.

Q: I have an athlete who is unable to order a pair of spandex that meets the NFHS logo specifications, but has a different pair of spandex/uniform bottom that does not meet the NFHS logo specifications. What should be done?

A: The school athletic administrator shall reach out to Emily Mason (emason@ohsaa.org) with the athlete's name and grade, to receive a waiver for the athlete to wear the non-compliant uniform bottoms. Please note this is a waiver for the logo specifications only and not the color. The color of the uniform bottom still must be like-colored.

Q: I have an athlete who is does not want to wear spandex. What should be done?

A: No problem! The athlete may wear any type of uniform bottom, as long as it is like-colored with the rest of the team.

Thank you!